



## U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# News Release

*Pacific Islands External Affairs Office*

300 Ala Moana Blvd., Room 5-311 Box 50187, Honolulu, HI 96850  
Phone: 808 792-9530 Fax: 808 792-9583

For Release: September 27, 2005  
Contact: Ken Foote, 808 792 9535 or 282 9442

PIEA-05-23

### **Fish and Wildlife Service Provides \$2.6 Million in Land Acquisition Funds to Hawaii**

Interior Secretary Gale Norton today announced more than \$13.4 million in grants to 26 states – including almost \$2.6 million to the State of Hawaii – to support acquisition of vital habitat for threatened and endangered fish, wildlife, and plant species. The grants, awarded through the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund, will benefit species throughout the United States ranging from mussels to peninsular bighorn sheep to Hawaiian forest birds.

In Hawaii, the funds will be provided to the Department of Land and Natural Resources to help acquire lands in Moanalua Valley on Oahu, Manuka Natural Area Reserve on Hawaii, and Carlsmith Trust property adjacent to Waiakea Forest Reserve on Hawaii.

"We are pleased to be able to support the efforts of so many people in the Department of Land and Natural Resources who are working with us to recover Hawaii's long list of threatened and endangered species," said Dave Allen, Pacific regional director for the Fish and Wildlife Service. "The Moanalua Valley purchase will conserve a significant native forest on Oahu, one that the Damon Estate has been protecting for years. This well-deserved acquisition will create a lasting conservation legacy on Oahu for the Damon Estate, and will benefit all the partners in the Koolau Mountains Watershed Partnership in their work to protect native ecosystems."

The grants, provided under the Recovery Land Acquisition Grants Program, allow states and territories the opportunity to acquire habitat for endangered and threatened species in approved recovery plans. Acquisition of habitat to secure long-term protection is often an essential element of a comprehensive recovery effort for a listed species.

On Oahu, \$1,634,364 will help the state acquire 3,714 acres of Moanalua Valley conservation lands currently owned by Damon Estate that are for sale on the open market. Located on the leeward side of the central Koolau Range, Moanalua Valley provides habitat for several endangered and rare forest bird species, and was the site of the last observations of the Oahu creeper and 'i'iwi. In addition, at least 11 endangered plant species, 3 rare plant species, and two endangered Oahu tree snail species are found in the area. The last known sighting of the endangered Hawaiian hoary bat was also in this valley. The lands will be added to existing State-owned conservation lands (the Honolulu Watershed Forest Reserve) for the purposes of endangered species conservation and management. This grant is the largest awarded under the program this year.

– more –

A total of \$875,000 will be provided to DLNR to acquire a 1,336-acre parcel on the windward side of Mauna Loa owned by the Carlsmith Trust. This native wet forest is relatively pristine and probably supports the endangered Hawaiian hoary bat, 'i'o, and several rare Hawaiian forest birds. Unlike the majority of lowland wet forests in the area, few alien plants have invaded the parcel. Once acquired, the parcel will be added to the existing Waiakea Forest Reserve.

A one-acre parcel located near the center of the Manuka Natural Area Reserve on the Big Island is the subject of the third grant of \$78,750. The Reserve was established in 1983 to protect 25,550 acres of land from near sea level to more than 5,000 feet in elevation. It is the largest Reserve in the State and includes 18 different natural communities. The small, 1-acre parcel is privately owned and currently for sale on the open market. It is the only privately owned parcel in the entire ahupua'a, and existing zoning could permit future development of the property. Surrounding lands – and perhaps the parcel itself – provide habitat for the endangered Hawaiian hoary bat and three endangered plant species.

A complete list of 2005 grant awards is available on the Internet at <http://endangered.fws.gov/grants/section6/index.html>.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 545 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resources offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign and Native American tribal governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.

– FWS –